

Same Song by Cyane (orphan_account)

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Summary:

Hopper tells Eleven he's her legal guardian. She doesn't want another Papa.

Same Song

Author's Note:

Next few weeks I'll just be shitting out Eleven & Hopper fluff/angst so get ready for this new series.

"Hey kid, can we... uh, can we talk?"

Hopper wiped his palms on his pants again, frustrated with how difficult he was finding it to initiate *that* conversation.

Of course. The inevitable conversation Hopper knew he would have to have-- the one where he told Eleven that he had legally adopted her. That he was, *legally*, his daughter.

It felt so wrong. Eleven had no semblance of a childhood; she had been broken from the day she was born, raised in a lie, as a lab rat, as an experiment. What she needed was therapy and a psychiatrist, and Hopper was neither. Hopper was only a man, riddled with almost as much PTSD as the girl. A man who had lost his own little girl.

But Eleven wasn't a replacement for Sara. And despite it all, it felt so *right*.

Eleven wasn't Sara, but she was still Hopper's little girl. Hopper still loved her with every fiber of his being, no matter how he denied it or tried not to... even if it had taken some work to get there.

Jane Hopper.

The name was all wrong, but Hopper didn't think it would make much of a difference. Eleven would always be El to him. The girl who got wide-eyed at the sight of dresses and Eggos.

A few weeks had passed since the Snow Ball, right before Eleven had gone back into hiding at the Cabin. Hopper could see the young girl itching to get out again, but with regular visits from Mike and the rest of the rascals, it was obvious that Eleven wasn't reaching the same point of cabin fever she'd had prior.

It had only been a few weeks.

But while Eleven itched to leave, Hopper itched to tell her.

The longer you wait, the harder it'll be, he told himself.

So, the following Friday, he sealed it, envelope in hand.

Eleven looked up from the dictionary. "Yes," she said slowly.

Hopper took another deep breath. *Like a band-aid.* "Listen, kiddo... there's been something I've been meaning to tell you. It's not really a big deal, I just... here."

He handed her the envelope with the birth certificate. Eleven took it curiously, looking it over before finding the note inside and pulling it out. While Hopper held his breath, she scrutinized it.

After a long minute, she turned back to him blankly. "I don't understand."

Dammit.

"It's a birth certificate, El. Your birth certificate- or, your new one, anyways. It means I'm your legal guardian."

Even as Hopper spoke the words, he knew that they had no meaning to Eleven and he was only going to have to elaborate further.

As predicted, Eleven frowned. "Legal guardian? What does it mean?"

Hopper sank into the seat across from her.

"It means that I'm technically adopting you. As my kid, El. Mostly for safety and legal reasons, you know. Nothing has to change," Hopper added quickly, "and we can just keep doing what we've been doing. But I just thought you should know."

Eleven still looked bewildered. She continued turning the paper over in her hands, trying to read some sort of meaning from it like it was in Braille.

Then, with a sudden, silent fierceness, Eleven slammed open the dictionary and rummaged through a few pages until she landed on 'adopt'.

Looking at the girl's furrowed expression, stiff posture, and stony, quiet attitude, Hopper realized that this conversation was definitely not going to be the short and sweet talk he'd been hoping for. And- of course it wasn't, when Eleven had no idea what was going on.

Eleven read through the definition over and over, slowly deciphering meaning.

"Adoptive... parents?"

"It's when a kid with no parents gets new parents. "

"You're my new parents?"

"Parent. Just me, right now, as your adoptive father."

Eleven's jaw clenched and her eyes flicked towards the window, skipping around the room, hitting everywhere except for Hopper's eyes.

He hadn't even thought of-- "Unless you don't *want*... unless you want to work it through with your aunt? There's other options, if you don't..."

Hopper rolled his eyes. He couldn't even say the damn words. Something bitter was growing in his throat at the thought. The thought that maybe Eleven didn't want to stay with him, that maybe Eleven wanted what she *should* have-- a real family, to get real help, where she could just be a normal kid and not get sucked into Hopper's black hole.

"I already have parents." Eleven muttered.

Hopper's breath caught.

Now, Eleven wanting to stay with her mom? To some degree, Hopper could understand that. But her... Jesus, her father?! Brenner was a sadistical monster.

"El, your dad--"

"I don't want another Papa!" Eleven yelled. Blood began oozing out from her nostril and the windows were beginning to tremble from her power.

Hopper's first reaction was sheer incomprehension. How on Earth could she not want another father? Nearly anyone would be better than Brenner.

"I don't want you to be like him," She continued, her voice turning into a sob as her breathing picked up.

Just like that, Hopper understood. Eleven wasn't defending Brenner- she thought that if Hopper became her father, he'd be her... well, *Papa*.

He quickly held out his hands placatingly to diffuse the situation.

"Shit- El, that's not what I meant." Eleven was escalating to a near state of hyperventilation, shaking her head rapidly, so Hopper reached out and took her hand. Gently, but firmly.

"Breathe."

Eleven's breath rattled but she squeezed Hopper's hand in return and fought to get herself back in control. Blood was running down her chin and Hopper reached over to wipe it away before it could stain something. He wiped away a stray tear at the same time.

"C'mon, in and out, with me. Work with me, kid. In... out. In... out."

It only took a few short moments for Eleven to match her breathing to his, but even when she had pulled her immediate panic away, her eyes were still wild with confusion and fear.

"Hear me out, okay, El? I need you to listen."

"Okay," Eleven gasped out shakily.

Hopper sighed and leaned back into the chair, feeling the urge to rub his temples.

"Right now, I am legally your adopted father. But I'm not going to be like your old man, okay? Brenner? I'm not *Papa*. You don't even have to call me anything different if you don't want to."

"Not Papa?"

"Not Papa," Hopper agreed.

Eleven's look of puzzlement was back, but the fear was replaced with relief, which Hopper would gladly take as a win.

"You know, uh, Wheeler? Mike? Mike has a dad, right? And that Lucas kid?"

Eleven nodded.

"They aren't like your old man, are they?"

"No. They don't hurt Mike and Lucas. Mike told me."

Hopper's smile strained at the reminder that Brenner *had* hurt Eleven. For most of her life, in fact.

"Right. See, not all dads are like yours was. I'm not going to be like your Papa was, okay? He was a psychotic bastard, and I'm not going to hurt you."

"...no tests?" Eleven asked hopefully.

"*No tests.*"

"No bath?"

"Just showers, then."

Looking pleasantly surprised, Eleven looked back to the birth certificate. "You're my new adopted parent?"

"I'm serious about nothing having to change, kid. I've been playing your guardian for almost two years, now, so... this is really just semantics." Despite Hopper's words, his insides were turning to mush, because- Eleven looked *happy*, and she had one of those small, rare,

hopeful smiles on.

"You're home?" Eleven asked.

"Yeah- we both are," Hopper replied.

"No: you are home. You are my home?"

Damn kids. Hopper's throat closed up with emotion and he let out a big smile.

"Yeah," he cleared his throat. "Yeah, El... we're family."

Eleven seemed to be grasping the weight of the situation. "Thank you," she whispered, almost reverently.

Hopper walked around the table and crouched by her chair, taking her shaking hands into his own. "We're family." Hopper repeated, as if that explained anything and everything.

She lurched forward, wrapping her arms around his neck and pulling him into a tight hug.

"Good."

Because despite Eleven having already had a father who had been anything but, and Hopper having had a daughter who had become collateral between her own life and his black hole, they still had found each other.

Hopper wasn't Brenner. Eleven could never be Sara. But that wasn't really the point.

The point was that two broken people had fixed themselves with one another, and that they had fixed each other.

And they had found a home- a family- together. The first one in a long time.

Author's Note:

Have I mentioned before that I'm absolute shit at endings because wow

Anywho I love feedback so please give me some concrit. I'll be posting loads more to this series with a focus on their relationship hopefully pretty soon, like I said, so if you're interested maybe subscribe to the series? Cool.

Thanks for reading <3

Edit: Happy late International Fanworks day as well.
Love all the support I've gotten.